



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



6th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

The theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV for the 6th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly – “I will never forget you” (Is 49:15) – reminds us that God’s unwavering love is the ultimate answer to the isolation and neglect so often experienced by the elderly. It brings comfort and hope, assuring us that the Lord knows each of us personally, forgets no one, and loves us unconditionally, even through the frailties of old age.

Since its creation in 2021, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly has grown into a cherished tradition that teaches our communities to truly value the elderly, not through occasional gestures, but as a permanent, central part of our lives. This celebration helps us appreciate older generations as vital keepers of our history, witnesses to our faith, and teachers for our lives.

This year, we want to place a special emphasis on closeness to others. We ask parishes and diocesan communities to reach out directly to those who live alone, are staying in care homes, or have no visitors. Let this Day be a tangible opportunity for everyone — especially young people —to spend time with their grandparents, the elderly in their families, and most importantly, those who are completely isolated.

Inspired by the wonderful initiatives of past years, we encourage similar creativity for this sixth edition. To support your efforts, the official logo is now available for all parishes and dioceses to use freely.

To give greater visibility to your local events, please share the details with us via email to anziani@laityfamilylife.va or post them on our social media channels using the hashtag #NonnieAnziani.

The pastoral kit is available on the website of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life at www.laityfamilylife.va.



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is a beautiful highlight, a privileged moment of the Church's broader ongoing pastoral care towards our older brothers and sisters, and is not designed to replace the continuous, rich pastoral life that must animate Christian communities throughout the year. The true spirit of the prophet's words comes alive in our ordinary daily routines — through weekly visits, patient listening, and shared prayer.

On this journey, the Dicastery is pleased to note the growing collaboration with the Episcopal Conferences, as well as the numerous ecclesial groups and associations dedicated to the pastoral care of the elderly. This network is both an encouraging sign and a precious resource, allowing us to respond more effectively to the challenges that aging poses to both the Church and society. The Dicastery intends to deepen these partnerships, based on the firmly conviction that only by working together — local Churches, associations, and religious communities alike — can we meaningfully reach out and become close to every elderly person, which the Gospel requires and their dignity deserves.

In the hope that this Sixth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly will help bring the Church's presence and the Lord's tenderness to all older people, we send you our warmest greetings in Christ.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Prefect

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

+ Dario Gervasi

Secretary

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Disposition of the Holy Father regarding the 2026 celebration of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

The Holy Father has directed that the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly will continue to be celebrated annually on the fourth Sunday in July, close to the liturgical memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus.

In response to numerous requests, he has granted Episcopal Conferences the authority to move the celebration to a different date if required by local pastoral needs and the specific circumstances of their communities.

In every diocese, the local bishop is to celebrate the Day in the cathedral church.

While the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life reiterates the importance of providing consistent pastoral care to grandparents and the elderly throughout the entire year, it requests to be formally notified of any changes made to the official date of the celebration.



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Prayer for the 6th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

Holy Father

Who watches over every person

Watch over me too when I am elderly.

You have revealed your name to me in Christ,

And You were not discouraged by my frailties.

You hold me tenderly in your hands,

And You caress my lines.

You will never forget me! (see Is 49:15).

Grant that I may not fear my weakness;

Help me learn to love it

Just as You love it.

Help me learn to listen to it

Just as You listen to it.

Help me embrace it

Just as You have chosen it –

You who, though all-powerful, clothed yourself in humility.

May growing old strip away all our pride

and all division

So that we may live these years

united in You.

You will never forget us! (see Is 49:15)

Amen.



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Further reading

Throughout this year, the Dicastery has organized several meetings for reflection, bringing together international experts to discuss the pastoral care of the elderly.

All resources and materials from these events are available on our official website:

Resources on the website www.laityfamilylife.va

<https://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/it/anziani/Risorse-anziani.html>

The 2nd International Congress on the Pastoral Care of the Elderly: “Your old men shall dream dreams”

<https://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/it/eventi/2025/ii-congresso-di-pastorale-degli-anziani.html>

Study Day: “A Bridge towards Heaven. The Magisterium of Fragility in a Time of Strength”

<https://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/eventi/2026/un-ponte-verso-il-cielo.html>



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Pastoral guidelines

We suggest celebrating the Day – in the footsteps of tradition – around two fundamental gestures: **the celebration of a Eucharistic liturgy dedicated to the elderly** and **a visit to the elderly people who live alone in your community**.

Visiting elderly people who live alone

- Deliver the message. Visit the elderly living alone in your community to ensure that everyone – even the most isolated members – receives the Holy Father’s message of closeness and comfort that the *Day* seeks to convey.
- Show community care. Use the visit as a tangible sign of the Church reaching out, as a way of reaffirming that the elderly, even the most isolated, remain at the heart of our communities.
- Leave no one behind. Make a personal and communal commitment through these visits to ensure that no one is forgotten.
- Bring a small gift. Take the opportunity to bring a small gift, like a flower, and read the *Day*’s message and prayer together.
- Go room to room. When visiting care homes, do not stay only in communal areas but also make the effort to visit bedridden residents in their individual rooms.
- Extend Eucharistic visits. Ask extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to extend their usual visits to the elderly, setting aside extra time for listening and sharing the message.
- Engage local families. Invite families to visit elderly neighbours living in their own apartment buildings or neighbourhoods to build closer community bonds.



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Preparing for the Day with the elderly

- Focus on them. Remember that the elderly are the main recipients of these activities and that the Holy Father's message is addressed directly to them.
- Encourage attendance. Ensure that as many elderly people as possible can participate in person in the Sunday liturgy celebrated for this occasion.
- Bring families together. Use this *Day* to help older generations and their families joyfully resume the habit of attending Holy Mass together with the whole parish community.
- Gather for reflection. Invite the elderly from your parish or ecclesial community to gather and reflect on the Pope's message, and distribute copies to all participants.
- Start ongoing groups. Consider using this *Day* to launch regular reflection groups for the elderly in your community, using the Pope's catechesis on old age as a guiding resource.
- Invite intercessory prayer. Ask the elderly to offer a special prayer for youth and for peace, honouring the ministry of intercession as a true vocation of old age.
- Include the homebound. Ensure that elderly people unable to attend in person still receive the message through the visits organised for isolated elderly members.



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Preparing for the Day with young people

- Organise ahead. Gather the young people of your community a few weeks in advance of the *Day* to explain the event and plan their visits so they reach as many elderly people as possible.
- Involve youth. Invite young people to help organise one or more of the community celebrations held in honour of the elderly.
- Share stories. Use the *Day* as an opportunity to host a gathering where young people can listen to testimonies and stories from older generations.
- Promote online. Encourage young people to launch social media campaigns to share the *Day*'s message using the hashtag **#NonnieAnziani**



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Liturgical resource

- Dedicate a mass. Ensure one of the Masses on Sunday, July 26, is dedicated to celebrating the *Day* with the grandparents and elderly members of your parish or community.
- Arrange transport. Involve community members in organising transportation to help elderly parishioners who cannot travel independently to attend Holy Mass.
- Involve the youth. Have the young people of the parish or community personally present the Holy Father's message to grandparents and the elderly during the celebration.
- Visit care facilities. Organise liturgical celebrations for *the Day* within hospitals and care homes on July 26, or the surrounding days, involving parish members to lead the Masses appropriately.
- Support poor elders. Consider dedicating the collection taken during the *Day's* Masses to support local projects for elderly people in need within your community.
- Provide Sacraments. Encourage all elderly community members to participate in the Sacraments, ensuring they have ample opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Suggestions for the Prayers of the Faithful

- For Pope Leo: That the Lord may bless and protect his ministry, and that the Church may always be a welcoming home where every elderly person can hear the reassuring words: “I will never forget you”. Let us pray.
- For all us elderly people: That we may not fear our frailty, but instead embrace it as a true vocation to prayer and reconciliation, bearing joyful witness to the Lord’s faithful love. Let us pray.
- For young people: That, by reaching out to those who live in solitude or the isolation of care homes, they may become tangible signs of God’s tenderness, which watches over and nourishes us like a mother. Let us pray.
- For all us grandparents: That we may serve as a source of wisdom for our families, passing on to new generations the treasure of a faith that rests securely in God’s everlasting love. Let us pray.
- For an end to all wars: That the Lord may hear our earnest plea, bringing consolation to those who suffer and granting true, lasting peace for the future of the whole world. Let us pray.



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2026



Final blessing

Blessing of Long Life

God of mercy,
who has granted these your children the gift of a long life,
pour out your blessing upon them.
Let them feel the sweetness and strength of your presence.
As they look back on the past,
may they rejoice in your mercy;
and, as they look to the future,
may they persevere in the hope that never dies.
To you be praise and glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

Welcome to Knock Shrine

Sunday 26 July 2026 · A day of grace, blessing and prayer

Newsletter Insert:

**THE ANNUAL NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS PILGRIMAGE
CELEBRATING THE 6TH WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY.**

ALL ARE WELCOME.

SUNDAY, 26TH JULY 2026

**KNOCK SHRINE – CHIEF CELEBRANT ARCHBISHOP EAMON MARTIN
COMMENCING AT 2:30PM WITH THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK**

**A DAY OF GRACE AND BLESSING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY AS WE HONOUR
GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY. PLEASE JOIN US.**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR RESOURCES:

www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org



All are welcome — bring your family, bring hope and joy.



The HOLY SEE

LEO XIV MESSAGES WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

ENGLISH ▼



MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS LEO XIV FOR THE SIXTH WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

[Feast of St Joachim and Anne, 26 July 2026]

[Multimedia]***I will never forget you (Is 49:15)****Dear brothers and sisters,*

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord promises that he will never forget any of us. He assures us that he has engraved our faces on the palms of his hands (cf. *Is* 49:16) and that his love is greater than a mother's love for her child (cf. *Is* 49:15). The prophet gives us a glimpse of an intimate and intense dialogue in which God addresses, in familiar terms, each person individually and the people as a whole. Even today, we can read these words as referring to each of us, and everyone can hear that "I will never forget you" spoken directly to them.

These are words that fill us with comfort and hope. They are the answer to an agonizing feeling that troubles the heart: "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me" (*Is* 49:14). How often in Sacred Scripture, especially in the Psalms, does prayer spring from the despair of those who feel that their lives are of no interest to anyone and are being neglected! The painful feeling of being forgotten is, unfortunately, shared by many people, and among them are quite a few elderly people.

God's love, which forgets no one, offers itself as an act of justice and a response to the anonymity in which human life all too often ends up lost. The lives of many elderly people, in particular, seem to be covered by a veil that blurs the features of their faces and shrouds them in oblivion. This is what happens in homes where loneliness reigns and also in those care facilities where each person's uniqueness risks being reduced to a bed number or an illness.

The celebration of the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly is an opportunity to rediscover that the Church is called to be a mother to all and that at any age it is always possible to recognize ourselves as sons and daughters of God. May this day, therefore, be an inspiration for everyone, especially the young, to revive the beautiful custom of visiting their grandparents, the elderly members of the family and even those who have no one to visit them. Bring them, through this message and your presence, the closeness and affection of the Pope. Ensure that the words of the prophet, "But I will never forget you," take the form of a tender and affectionate encounter. "In an era that favors speed and fragmentation, the human person still yearns to receive care and recognition from attentive minds, kind words and hands capable of tenderness. The digital culture multiplies connections and offers new opportunities for interaction; yet, the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness" (Encyclical Letter, *Magnifica Humanitas*, 239).

The Church understands the suffering of her elderly members; she knows full well that they are all too often viewed through the lens of stereotypes and considered a burden; she is aware that a profit-driven economy weakens family ties; she knows that many elderly people are left behind by children who are forced to migrate or, in some cases, to fight in wars. For each of these reasons, she joyfully proclaims the Lord's promise: "But I will never forget you!"

It is a joy, at any age, but especially when we are no longer young, to discover, as *John Paul I* said, that we are the recipients "of undying love on the part of God. We know: he has always his eyes open on us, even when it seems to be dark. He is our father;

even more he is our mother" ([Angelus](#), 10 September 1978). Even if it does not come naturally to think this way, the truth is that even in old age we do not cease to be sons and daughters; therefore, the invitation to return to the arms of God — whose love is both paternal and maternal — remains worthwhile at any age.

For many, the discovery of God's tenderness takes place over the course of their lives, sometimes even in its final stages. Indeed, unlike in the past, it is increasingly common to reach old age without having had a genuine experience of faith. In such cases, old age — beginning with the questions that arise with greater urgency during this season of life — can become the right time to begin or resume a spiritual life. On this new journey, one can recognize that God, as Saint Augustine says, "is a mother because he cherishes, because he nourishes, because he nurses, because he protects" (*Commentary on Psalm 27*, II, 18). It is an awareness that helps us not to feel ashamed of the fragility that emerges and also to understand that we are always in need of one another and in need of attention and care. To God, who draws near to us and whom we learn to recognize in his tenderness, we can now turn with filial trust in prayer. It is never too late to begin turning to him. It can be a great gift for everyone.

Dear elderly men and women, [Pope Francis](#) spoke of you as a "new people" ([Catechesis](#), 23 February 2022), since the number of older adults has never been so large in human history. It is, therefore, more important than ever to reflect with you, this "new people," on what our vocation might be when fragility — the human person's companion from birth — seems to take over. I would like to say to you: do not be afraid of fragility! It is precisely this weakness that holds within itself a new potential that also illuminates the other stages of life. Indeed, when "we acknowledge our fragility, our hearts become open to supporting one another and to invoking the One who can grant what no human power can ensure: the profound reconciliation of hearts and, with it, true peace" ([Meeting with the Algerian community](#), Basilica of Our Lady of Africa, Algiers, 13 April 2026).

This is how we can live out our old age as Christians: "fragile" yet at the same time "called." A man and a woman can, in fact, be born anew in old age (cf. *Jn* 3:4-6) and exclaim, with the prophet: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (*Is* 30:15). This strength can become an invitation not to resort to the ways of arrogance and power to ensure human coexistence, but to the ways of reconciliation and true peace. In this time, so harshly marked by the violence of war and social unrest, many wonder what the world in which their grandchildren will grow up will be like. I urge you, dear friends, to join me in praying earnestly that peace may soon come to the whole world.

Dear elderly brothers and sisters, I thank you for supporting me every day with your prayers, especially when you recite the Holy Rosary. I return this gratitude from the bottom of my heart and leave you with this prayer: may the Lord always renew us in faith, hope and love — He who never forgets us!

From the Vatican, 15 June 2026

LEO PP. XIV

Copyright © Dicastery for Communication - Libreria Editrice Vaticana



The HOLY SEE